UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/47/7/Add.13
9 March 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session
Agenda items 104 and 62 (f)

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN AFRICA, UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Revised estimates under section 37, Department of Political Affairs

Fourteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (A/C.5/47/62).

2. The report of the Secretary-General, submitted pursuant to a recommendation of the Advisory Committee in its report to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, 1/ states that an additional appropriation of $300,000 would be required for 1993 under section 37 to cover the estimated 1993 administrative costs of the above-mentioned three centres. It is recalled that by its resolution 46/37 F of 6 December 1991, the General Assembly decided that the administrative costs of the centres should be financed from the regular budget. In connection with the adoption of that resolution, as stated in paragraph 3 of the report of the Secretary-General, the Fifth Committee, at its 46th meeting on 7 December 1991:

> "decided to inform the General Assembly that the adoption of the resolution might require up to $600,000 [for 1992-1993] and that the actual additional appropriation would be reviewed as soon as possible during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Committee also informed the Assembly in its report 2/ that, bearing in mind the comments and observations of ACABQ and all the views expressed in the Fifth Committee, it would review the matter further in the light of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General."

3. The amount of $300,000, which would be distributed among the three centres as shown in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General, is over and above the appropriation of $506,900 authorized by the General Assembly under the programme budget for 1992-1993 for the salaries and common staff costs of three P-5 posts for the Directors of the centres.

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its report to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, it made a number of observations concerning the financing of the centres. 3/ Without prejudice to those observations, the Advisory Committee went on to recommend that should the Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee, bearing in mind their respective responsibilities, would advise the Assembly as to the actual level of administrative support. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General submit a detailed report "providing, inter alia, a full disclosure of the financial position of each centre, with supporting documentation, the proposed programme of work and a functional breakdown of all staff, whether administrative or operational." 4/

5. The Advisory Committee regrets the late submission of the report. It also is of the view that, as briefly summarized in the paragraphs below, the report falls short in providing accurate information on the level of programmes funded through voluntary contributions. Such information would enable the Committee to determine the appropriate level of administrative support.

6. The report of the Secretary-General provides the programme of activities for 1992 for each centre and that proposed for 1993; however, no indication of the estimated cost of the activities is included in the report. Although annexes IV, VII and XI provide information regarding pledges for 1992, the lack of information concerning programme costs makes it difficult to ascertain whether such programmes can realistically be implemented and whether the level of administrative support, which should be considered in the light of the total programme, is appropriate.

7. Moreover, no information has been provided, even on a partial or half-year basis, of expenditures incurred in 1992. In this connection, the Committee, in response to inquiry, was informed that, although the books for 1992 had not yet been closed, it appeared, in respect of the Centre in Africa, that income in 1992 fell short of 1992 expenditures by some $40,000. With regard to the Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean, income exceeded expenditures by approximately $1,000. Income in respect of the Centre in Asia and the Pacific far exceeded expenditure, in large measure because $500,000 was pledged for the construction of the Centre's building. In addition, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the Centre has been operating on a limited scale,

although, with the appointment of the Director a.i. in September 1992, it is expected that the Centre will operate on a consolidated and strengthened basis.

8. The Advisory Committee is also of the view that the report of the Secretary-General should have contained information in respect of any activities which are being implemented through support from other disarmament trust funds or from Headquarters. In respect of the latter, the Advisory Committee was informed, for example, that a seminar on confidence- and security-building measures in southern Africa, held in February 1993, had been organized from Headquarters. Representatives of the Secretary-General emphasized that this had been done precisely because of the lack of a secure infrastructure in the regional centre for Africa. Representatives of the Secretary-General also emphasized that not all of the activities projected for 1992 have been implemented, owing to the lack of sufficient resources from voluntary contributions, and that part of the difficulty in raising funds through voluntary contributions is that, in many cases, potential donors wished to see an infrastructure already in place at the respective centres before committing themselves to contributing to any project. No specific information was provided to the Advisory Committee in this regard.

9. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the above statements illustrate that a further review by the Secretary-General should be undertaken, as discussed in paragraph 14 below.

10. As discussed above, the report of the Secretary-General is lacking in respect of the totality of the programme to be delivered in financial terms, as well as in respect of providing up-to-date information regarding expenditures incurred in 1992. Equally lacking, in the Advisory Committee's view, is clear justification and substantiation of the administrative expenditures that have been proposed. The Advisory Committee questions, for example, the number of local staff requested, in particular for the Centre in Africa.

11. The Advisory Committee also points out that the level of administrative support should be commensurate with the likely level of the programmes to be financed from extrabudgetary sources, i.e., administrative costs should be linked to substantive activities (see para. 6 above). Notwithstanding the statement by the Secretary-General regarding the reluctance of potential donors to contribute before the establishment of an infrastructure (see para. 8 above), the Advisory Committee remains of the view that administrative costs must represent a reasonable percentage of programme delivery.

12. As stated in paragraph 2 above, the Secretary-General is requesting $300,000 to cover the administrative expenses of the centres for 1993. To this it is necessary to add the cost of the Directors for 1993 (approximately one half of the $506,900, or $253,000), which has already been appropriated for 1992-1993. In other words, total administrative expenses borne by the regular budget in 1993 would amount to approximately $553,000. In response to inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that approximate expenditures in 1992 of the three centres combined, including both administrative and programme expenditures, amounted to $312,400. As shown in the annexes to the report of the Secretary-General, for the biennium 1990-1991, combined trust fund expenditures for the centres amounted to approximately $842,700, including both

administrative and programme costs; this translates to an approximate annual expenditure from the trust funds of the centres of $421,350.

13. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of commitment authority of $150,000 under section 37 of the programme budget for 1992-1993 in order to provide for the administrative support of the regional centres. Such amount as would need to be appropriated should be a first call on the contingency fund in 1993, as it would relate to a proposal which had been carried over from 1992. In apportioning the $150,000 among the centres, the Secretary-General should take into account all relevant factors, including the current financial status of each centre and the programme of work.

14. The Advisory Committee also recommends that the Secretary-General, in the context of his proposed programme budget for 1994-1995, submit his long-term proposals with respect to these regional centres, in particular as regards their financial viability. Furthermore, a determination needs to be made as to which activities should be carried out by Headquarters on behalf of the centres and those to be entrusted to the centres themselves. There is also a need, in the Advisory Committee's opinion, to have a coherent and integrated programme for the centres, bearing in mind the related activities funded under the regular budget.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 7A (A/46/7, Add.1-16), document A/46/7/Add.11.

2/ A/46/752, para. 6.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 7A (A/46/7, Add.1-16), document A/46/7/Add.11, paras. 10, 11 and 15.

4/ Ibid., para. 17.